

Tired of bad news? 6 ways local groups are helping others



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(Photo: Robert Scheer / IndyStar 2013 file)

There are so many positive initiatives going on in the Indianapolis area that it's impossible to report on all of them. It's a good problem to have, but I wish I could do more.

Today, I'm sharing a few of the more recent items that have crossed my desk. Please support those you care about or find something you can do in the community to help someone else.

- **Ride Indiana:** OrthoIndy Foundation and [Wish for Our Heroes](https://wishforourheroes.org/) (<https://wishforourheroes.org/>) is sponsoring RIDE INDIANA, a four-day, 300-mile cycling journey across Indiana to raise money for Hoosier military families. The ride started Thursday and finishes Sunday at the American Legion Mall in Downtown Indianapolis. It included routes from Bloomington to Lafayette, Lafayette to Warsaw, and Warsaw to Carmel

before today's final leg.

A public celebration is planned for 1 p.m. Sunday at Veterans Memorial Plaza, 47 E. North St.

The fundraiser is led by wounded military and includes active-duty military, veterans and civilians. Each cyclist averages seven hours of riding per day, at a rate of 15 mph until over 300 miles are completed. Funds are raised through individual cyclists, as well as sponsorships, including OrthoIndy Foundation, Kroger, Old National Bank and Stanley Tools.

"We are so excited to have Indiana's continued support for this event, and most importantly, for our Hoosier heroes and their families," said Jeff Wells, president of Wish for Our Heroes. "Our first year (2014) was a huge success, and we are hoping to assist twice as many families this year." Learn more at rideindiana.org (<http://wishforourheroes.org/rideindiana>).

- **Parker's Place:** [Parker's Place Foundation](http://www.parkersplacefoundation.org/) (<http://www.parkersplacefoundation.org/>), designed to help parents who have experienced infant loss, will have a public launch event from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday at the Montage, 8580 Allison Pointe Blvd.

The organization is named for founder Janelle Demaree's infant son, who died in 2008. "Parker's Place was created after experiencing our own loss and (a) deep desire to connect with other parents who understood our pain."

More at [parkersplacefoundation.org](http://www.parkersplacefoundation.org) (<http://www.parkersplacefoundation.org>).

- **Arts for Learning** (<http://artsforlearningindiana.org/>): The Neighborhood Stories project, an expansion of the Fresh StART Indy program, is underway with the creation of a "Reader's Chair" and workshops on the east side.

The "Reader's Chair," designed by artist Emily Kennerk, is being crafted by Indiana Furniture and will be featured as part of the city's Chalk Walk Arts Festival on June 4. The "Reader's Chair" is a 10-foot-tall, mobile, public artwork that will be used as a meeting point for regular community storytelling and reading events.

Throughout May, Arts for Learning teaching artists Bob Sander and Jingo de la Rosa will conduct storytelling and illustration workshops with students and their families at locations including the East Tenth United Methodist Church and Youth Center and the Neighborhood Fellowship Church.

Sander, a professional storyteller, will encourage residents to share stories about their neighborhood, while de la Rosa will help students create drawings to accompany the stories. They will be collected into a book to be published by Author Solutions, a division of Penguin Random House.

Neighborhood Stories was funded by the Central Indiana Community Foundation, the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation, the Efroymsen Family Fund and Lilly Endowment. More at artsforlearningindiana.org (<http://artsforlearningindiana.org/>).

- **Gleaners Food Bank:** An open house for [Gleaners Food Bank](http://www.gleaners.org/) (<http://www.gleaners.org/>)'s expanded Community Cupboard, an on-site food pantry, will be at 4:30 p.m. Monday at 3737 Waldemere Ave.

"The Community Cupboard is much more than just a food pantry, it is a necessity in our community," said Gleaners CEO Cindy Hubert. "The expansion allows us to serve more families, who will be able to sit comfortably inside, out of the weather elements, as they wait to shop for nutritious food. We will be offering cooking classes and nutrition education to help our shoppers better feed themselves and their families."

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